

Biggleswade Urban District

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

**Health and Sanitary Circumstances
of the District**

For the Year ended December 31st, 1921

BY

J. HUTCHINSON WOOD,

M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members

OF THE

Biggleswade Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you the Report on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of your District for the year 1921.

By direction of the Ministry of Health, an Annual Report of a full and detailed character, called a Survey Report, will normally be required at intervals of not more than five years. In other years an Ordinary Report of a more simple character is required. The Annual Reports for 1919 and 1920 are to be treated as constituting the first of the series of Survey Reports, this therefore is an Ordinary Report, and will accordingly be found to contain less detail than has been the custom in previous years.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

J. HUTCHINSON WOOD.

April 1922.

1.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres)	4617
Population (1921)	5400
Number of inhabited houses (1921)	1321 approx.
Number of families or separate occupiers (1921)	1321 approx.
Rateable Value	£35482
Assessable Value	£19793

2.—EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

Population.

The estimated mid-yearly figure of 5400 is supplied for the purpose of this report by the Registrar-General from the best data available for his use at the moment. I think, however, that, when the final Census figure is forthcoming, the above will be found to be much under-estimated.

Births.

	Total	M.	F.	
Legitimate	105	60	45	} Birth Rate (R.G.) 20.37
Illegitimate	5	3	2	

The birth-rate for the whole of England and Wales for the year 1921, was 22.4.

Deaths.

	Total	M.	F.	
Civilians only (all causes) ...	67	38	29	Death Rate (R.G.) 12.4

The death-rate from all causes for the whole of England and Wales for 1921 was 12.1

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of childbirth } From Sepsis .. 0
 } „ Other causes 0
 6 deaths (legitimate children 6, illegitimate 0) occurred in infants under one year of age, and the death-rate per 1000 births was as follows :

Legitimate	54.5	} Total .. 54.5
Illegitimate	0	

This is again the lowest rate on record for the district. The corresponding rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1921 was 83.

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	1
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	0

There has been no unusual or excessive mortality during the year.

The following table gives the causes of death :

	Males.	Females.
Whooping Cough	—	1
Diphtheria	1	—
Influenza	1	—
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	3	4
Other Tuberculous Disease	3	1
Cancer (inalignant disease)	3	4
Diabetes	1	—
Cerebral Hemorrhage, &c.	1	4
Heart Disease	3	1
Arterio-Sclerosis	—	3
Bronchitis	2	2
Pneumonia (all forms)	3	2
Other respiratory diseases	—	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum ..	1	—
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1	1

	Males.	Females.
Cirrhosis of Liver	1	—
Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth	2	—
Suicide	—	1
Other deaths from violence	3	1
Other defined diseases	9	2
Causes ill-defined or unknown	—	1
	<hr/> 38	<hr/> 29
	<hr/>	<hr/>

3—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	7	7	1
Scarlet Fever	1	1	0
Pneumonia	7	0	5
Ophthalmia Neonatorum....	1	0	0
Erysipelas	3	0	0
Tuberculosis :—			
(a) Pulmonary { M	3	—	3
{ F	6	—	4
{ Total	9	—	7
(b) Non-Pulmonary { M	2	—	3
{ F	0	—	1
{ Total	2	—	4

Analysis of the total cases notified under age-groups.

[illegible]

Analysis of deaths under age-groups.

[illegible]

The notification of tuberculosis in the district is not efficient, as only one half the tuberculosis deaths have been previously notified. A circular letter has been forwarded to all general practitioners in the district pointing out the importance of notification, and in addition I have personally interviewed them on various occasions with regard to the same matter.

4.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

There is nothing specially noteworthy to be recorded under this heading.

5.—SUMMARY (FOR REFERENCE) OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

Professional Nursing in the Home.

None is provided by this Authority, but the County Council employs a Health Visitor for certain work which it undertakes in the district.

There is no parish or district nurse, and some form of nursing is greatly needed. See further remarks below, under Clinics and Treatment Centres.

Midwives.

Registration and employment supervised by the County Council.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

Maternity and Child Welfare Centre is carried on under the County Council in Biggleswade.

Tuberculosis Centre also carried on under the County Council in Biggleswade.

Venereal Disease Centre at Bedford provided by County Council.

In addition to the above, special mention must be made of the V.A.D. Medical Supply Depot, which has been established in Crab Lane, Biggleswade. The Depot is in charge of 1 Sister and 2 V.A.D.'s, and is open daily from 10 to 11.30 for the dressing of wounds, and other cases requiring daily attention. Patients pay a small weekly fee, and are only received on the recommendation of doctors practising in the district.

This Association is doing most valuable work, and if in the future its scope could be extended to include some "Nursing in the home" it would prove the greatest possible boon to the district. It should be supported with enthusiasm by all who have the welfare of the district at heart.

Hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or C.C.

	Hospital.	Authority.	Accommodation
(1) Tuberculosis	Mogerhanger Park	County Council	—
(2) Maternity	none		
(3) Children	none		
* (4) Fever	Biggleswade Isolation Hospital.	Jointly with Biggleswade R.D.	22 Beds.
(5) Smallpox	Biggleswade Smallpox Hospital.	Jointly with Biggleswade R. D.	12 Beds.
(6) Other	Infirmary	Guardians	—
	Mental Hospital (Stotfold)	County Council	—

*The alterations and repairs of this Hospital are long overdue and should receive immediate attention. See my Annual Report for 1920.

Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children.

None except that provided by the Guardians,

Ambulance facilities.

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|---|---|--|
| (a) For Infectious cases | } | One Motor Ambulance
stationed at the
Isolation Hospital. |
| (b) For Non-infectious and accident cases | | |

6.—LABORATORY WORK.

Bacteriological Examinations.

Arrangements are made whereby medical men practising in the town can obtain free Bacteriological examinations in cases of Diphtheria, Typhoid Fever, Tuberculosis and Meningitis. These examinations are carried out by the Lister Institute.

During the year 14 such examinations were made.

Provision of Antitoxin.

A supply of diphtheria antitoxin is kept at the Isolation Hospital and is issued free to Medical Men on request.

Tetanus Antitoxin is supplied by the County Council, Shire Hall, Bedford, similarly.

Adoptive Acts, Bye-laws and Regulations in force within the District

Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890.

Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890. Part III.

Bye-laws or Regulations are in force respecting:

- Common Lodging-houses.
- Slaughter-houses.
- Cleansing of Footways.
- Removal of House Refuse.
- Cleansing of Privies.
- Prevention of Nuisances.
- Keeping of Animals.
- Offensive Trades.
- New Streets and Buildings.
- Dairies, Cowsheds, Milkshops, etc.

7.—SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

A summary of the work of the Sanitary Department during the year will be found in the report of the Sanitary Inspector at the end of this report.

8.—PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

One Medical Officer of Health (part time only), one Sanitary Inspector, who is also Inspector of Foods, and in addition is Surveyor and Water Engineer to the district.

9.—HOUSING.

During the year 40 houses erected on the Dells site under the Assisted Housing Scheme were completed and occupied. Of the 188 houses on the Newtown Site 52 are completed or in process of erection, and some of these have been occupied since the termination of the year. On the remainder, no further action is being taken, by instruction of the Ministry of Health. The general

Housing conditions of the district, however, still remain, in my opinion, in an extremely unsatisfactory state, and I have nothing to add excepting to emphasize the remarks made in my previous Annual Reports on this matter, and to express the hope that the building of suitable houses on the Newtown Site will be further proceeded with at the earliest favourable opportunity.

The following is a summary of the Housing work completed up to the end of the year :

Number of new houses erected during the year :—	
(a) Total.	45
(b) As part of a municipal housing scheme.	44
1. <i>Unfit dwelling houses.</i>	
Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	280
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	22
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	21
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	115
2. <i>Remedy of defects without Service of formal Notices.</i>	
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	101
3. <i>Action under Statutory Powers.</i>	
A.—Proceedings under section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1919	Nil.
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit	
(a) by owner	
(b) by Local Authority in default of owner	
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close.	
B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	1
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :—	
(a) by owners	1
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	0
C.—Proceedings under section 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1909.	
(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders.	7
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	7
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	0
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	0
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	0

REPORT of SANITARY INSPECTOR.

298 Premises have been inspected for Sanitary or Housing Defects.

Informal notices for the abatement of nuisances or the remedy of defects observed during Ordinary Inspections of the District were given as follows :—

Defective and obstructed drains	69
Accumulations of manure, etc.	4
Defective W.C's.	25
Dirty and dilapidated buildings	51
To provide ash bins	39
Other defects	5
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	193
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Eight cases of Infectious Disease were investigated, and 13 premises were disinfected.

Building Plans.

The following plan for New Buildings were approved by the Council.

Dwelling Houses	2
Workshops and Business Premises	2
Alterations to existing Premises	1
Temporary Building	1
	<hr/>
	6
	<hr/>

Slaughter Houses.

There are 5 registered and 1 licensed Slaughter Houses in the district. The structural condition of all these is good, and they are generally very well kept. Twenty-two inspections have been made during the year. Instructions given as to the cleansing of premises, and the disposal of offal and drainage, have been complied with.

Cowsheds and Dairies.

Eleven persons are registered as Cowkeepers and Dairyman. With two exceptions the condition of these premises is fairly satisfactory, but more frequent cleansing of the cowsheds, and removal of manure is desirable. Twenty eight inspections have been made and four notices to cleanse have been given.

Bakehouses.

There are ten bakehouses in the district. The structural conditions of these is good and they are generally well kept. They have been visited from time to time, and two notices to cleanse have been given.

Factories and Workshops.

Eight additions have been made to the register of these premises, the total number now registered being 64, made up as follows :

Bakers	10	Joiners, etc.	7	Tailors, Dressmakers, etc.	7
Millers	3	Plumbers	4	Bootmakers, etc.	7
Motor and Cycle		Printers	3	Photographic Works	1
Engineers	15			Miscellaneous	7

Food Inspections.

Retail Shops and Stores have been visited and seven quantities of food-stuffs were condemned and destroyed as unfit for human consumption. These included Beef 4, Tinned Goods 3.

Water Supply.

Including the 40 houses erected by the Council on the Dells site, 1287 houses are now connected to the mains.

Fifteen connections were made during the year, as under :

Dwelling Houses	4
Shops	1
Works	2
Gardens	2
Supplies for Stock	4
Farm Premises	1
Builder's Supply	1

15

The average supply per head per day (taking 4.3 persons per property and including all water used for trade and public purposes) is about 18.84 gallons.

Scavenging.

The removal of house refuse is at present carried out by direct labour, two horses and carts, and four men being employed for the purpose. A scheme for the adoption of mechanical transport, by which the cost of the work would be reduced, and increased efficiency obtained, was submitted to the Sanitary Committee, and this will receive further consideration. The provision of proper ash-bins has received attention, but it will be necessary to press for suitable covered receptacles to be provided where necessary.

Sewerage.

Including forty Council Houses at the Dells, 44 houses have been connected to the Sewers during the year. The total number of houses connected to the Sewerage System is now 1200. One property remains to be connected and this work is now in the hands of a builder.

The Sewers on the Newtown Housing Site were completed during the year by the responsible Contractor.

Other than the Sewers on this site no extensions to the System have been made during the year.

An improvement to the storm water overflow at Mill Lane was effected by the provision of a tidal valve, which excludes river water from the Sewers at flood times, thus reducing the amount of pumping required.

Untreated sewage has at times been discharged into the river Ivel through the storm overflow at the north end of Shortmead Street. This overflow comes into operation within a very few minutes of the pumping machinery being stopped, and immediately if the Shortmead Street ejectors cease working for any reason. The hours of pumping have been re-arranged, and it is hoped in future to avoid any discharge from this overflow during the day.

